

# OCPA FaxLine Report

a public policy information service for members of the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs, Inc.

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Dear OCPA Member:

Wednesday, March 17, 2010

Recently, American Enterprise Institute President, Arthur C. Brooks, appeared on John Stossel's Fox Business Show, where he stated that there is an intensifying battle between free enterprise and statism, which is shaping the future of our country. He claims that statism is becoming the "central organizing power in the economy."

According to Wikipedia . . . Statism is: "an ideology advocating the use of states to achieve goals, both economic and social. Economic statism, for instance, promotes the view that the state has a major and legitimate role in directing the economy, either directly through state-owned enterprises and other types of machinery of government, or indirectly through economic planning. It may also refer to a political philosophy that holds that sovereignty is vested not in the people but in the national state, and that all individuals and associations exist only to enhance the power, the prestige, and the well-being of the state."

In writing about his interview with Brooks for Townhall.com, Stossel says he fears that too many Americans "want a Mommy State to take care of them." That's a statement that merits serious consideration. Stossel substantiates his point. He writes, "According to the Tax Foundation, 60 percent of the population now gets more in government benefits than it pays in taxes. What does that say about a society in which more than half the people live at the expense of the rest? Worse, the dependent class is growing. The 60 percent will soon be 70 percent."

That's not only appalling, it's frightening. When citizens become dependent on government, government grows in size *and authority*. Citizens who hand over the responsibility of their lives to a government bureaucracy will merely multiply the scenarios of government inefficiencies we experience today. Think of it like replicating the Department of Motor Vehicles over and over again. Like drones, citizens sit and wait in rooms painted grey for what seems an eternity. Those countless chairs filled with expressionless zombies, who come back to life only after their number is called. To prevent us from entering such Twilight Zone episodes, some soul searching is needed.

How many of us have been compromised by some kind of benefit from the government dole? Oh, I understand the justification. "I've paid for it. It's mine." But what if Americans who are genuinely and sincerely sick and tired of all the endless "entitlements" gave theirs up? What would start to happen then? Stossel writes, "At the beginning of 'The Road to Serfdom,' Hayek acknowledges that mere material wealth is not all that's at stake when the government controls our lives: 'The most important change . . . is a psychological change, an alteration in the character of the people.'"

If we could reverse this Mommy State trend we would see the character of the American people in their finest hour. Instead of just reading about the sacrifices of our nation's founders we would start seeing new heroes emerge. You remember . . . "our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor." I believe real Americans like that still exist.

Until next time . . . Brett A. Magbee, Vice President for Operations

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